

Cady Guyton
Annotation #1
September 20, 2014
The End of the Line
633 words

1. Title, director and release year?

Released in 2009, The End of the Line was directed by Rupert Murray and based on the book written by Charles Clover.

2. What is the central argument or narrative of the film?

The film culminates on the concern of overfishing and the collapse of the global oceanic system, at human hands under the reign of big business.

3. How is the argument or narrative made and sustained? (Use concrete examples from the film to illustrate.)

With the proof of the problem global documentation, the film frequently used scenes and images of the ocean and fishing industry to illustrate the problem. Occasionally data was represented with graphs specific to population and species. Two types of scenes were shot to capture the problems of unsustainable fishing practices and species collapse. Trolling nets and literal tons of fish are shown being pulled along the ocean floor and onto the ships. In contrast, scenes of grey and empty ocean floors, nets with one or two fish and small, sickly, species are shown to expose the aftermath of the other scenes.

4. What sustainability issues did you spot? Identify and explain each. (Examples - Political, Legal, Economic, Technological, Media, Organizational, Educational, Behavioral, Cultural, Ecological)

Multiple issues of sustainability were depicted within the film. The problem identified was collapse of the oceans ecosystem. The issues presented that are causing the collapse are over fishing, under reporting, and an ever increasing demand for fish around the world in conjunction with a very apparent shift from local fishing practices to a global industry focused on big business and making a profit.

5. What parts of the film did you find most persuasive and/or compelling?

The most persuasive part of the film was best represented by the last few minutes where there was a clear call to action for the average consumer, giving hope and the power to change to the individual, while emphasizing the importance of being informed and making decisions to encourage change.

6. Does the film have emotional appeal to you? Why? (Use concrete examples from the film to illustrate.)

The film has a slight emotional appeal showing scenes of fish being hooked, and dragged through the ocean, across ship decks, and mass stored and slaughtered. Using emotional appeal of the environment, clips shown of massive nets being dragged across the sea floor ravaging beautiful color reefs, animals habitants, and a whole host of other wonders.

7. Does the film rely more on science or emotion? (How does the film balance the scientific argument and the emotional argument?)

The film relies more heavily on science; perhaps a necessity with the emotional disconnect between humans and fish. "Fish aren't cute" Additionally, the sheer vastness of the ocean becomes problematic in itself because it is first difficult to grasp that something so large and bountiful for so many years could be struggling to survive, combined with an almost insurmountable scale of the sea.

8. Does the film want you to do something? If the film does suggest action, do you think it is a good idea? Will the suggested action help?

The film lays out in no uncertain terms a clear call to action within the last few minutes. After an hour and a half of specific problems, encouraged action, and hope for change, Murray asks that every person (every "average consumer") Asks before you buy—know where your seafood is coming from and if it's being caught legally and sustainably. Tell politicians, bring up the subject, write to officials to put the problem on their radar and let them know that it is a concern to you, the voter. Lastly, join the movement; be aware of what's happening around you and how you can be involved. Education, and awareness are the two key factors in solving a problem like this—one with such a clear solution.

9. Are there other actions that are not suggested that should be taken?

The film touched on the recent "fad" of seafood, fish diets, and glamorous seafood plates in high class restaurants around the world. It didn't directly address the disconnect present between sustainability concerns of seafood as compared to big agriculture. The problem is clear when vegetarians become pescatarians.

10. What was the target audience for this film? Why?

The target audience for The End of the Line was very clearly the average consumer. A difference in this film as compared to other documentaries of environmental issues is that there was no shying away from the solution and responsibility. The heartening and frustrating thing with over fishing is that we have the knowledge and the solutions to act now and solve the problem; and that power is with the average consumer. If we care, ask the right questions and stay informed, the industry will cater to the majority to preserve their profits.

Cady Guyton
Annotation #2
Urbanized
472 words

1. Title, director and release year?

Urbanized was directed by Gary Hustwit and released in 2011.

2. What is the central argument or narrative of the film?

The central argument of the film questions urban planning and design as it exists today. It encourages critiques around the world and the various differences in how we live and where.

3. How is the argument or narrative made and sustained? (Use concrete examples from the film to illustrate.)

The argument is made using a series of examples and case studies of cities and cultures around the world ranging from New York City, to Bogota to Mumbai. Planning, growth, and global expansion are followed in the years prior to this critique.

4. What sustainability issues did you spot? Identify and explain each. (Examples - Political, Legal, Economic, Technological, Media, Organizational, Educational, Behavioral, Cultural, Ecological)

Cities have become the perfect display of a whole host of unsustainable cultural practices that we simultaneously thrive and suffer under. Our urban existence exposes car culture and oil obsessions, the vast disparity between the extremely rich and the extremely poor.

5. What parts of the film did you find most persuasive and/or compelling?

Exposure of the living conditions elsewhere in the world cannot be ignored and are often startling when seen for the first time. I personally find the work by Alejandro Aravena incredibly compelling and empowering to design for a better situation as opposed to attempting to "fix" the way that others live. Redesign the larger framework to bring about a solution.

6. Does the film have emotional appeal to you? Why? (Use concrete examples from the film to illustrate.)

I would say that the film has an inherently emotional appeal if for no other reason than appealing to human compassion. The problem of unsustainable cities and city design manifests itself in human suffering; this appeal is most apparent in the discussions about and scenes of Mumbai. Additionally, the discussion with the home owners of ELEMENTAL projects provide hope and smiles as people are interviewed succeeding and establishing themselves.

7. Does the film rely more on science or emotion? (How does the film balance the scientific argument and the emotional argument?)

The film seems to rely more on emotion over science because the science of cities and their layout and planning is while easy to document visually, data collection can be a difficult and arduous task with little money or man power available to accomplish it.

8. Does the film want you to do something? If the film does suggest action, do you think it is a good idea? Will the suggested action help?

Like science over emotion, a call to action is not explicitly depicted. Perhaps the best argument of this film is to outline a problem, a problem that is easily over looked when not living in or surrounded by it. The best call to action is to explain the problem and to make people aware that change is necessary and that there is something wrong with the way that we live.

9. Are there other actions that are not suggested that should be taken?

Actions are not directly suggested but that should be taken worldwide is the question the automobile. Car culture and car cities are becoming a problem across the globe spreading from developed nations to those that are developing.

10. What was the target audience for this film? Why?

The target for the audience is the general the public. The public is who the city is designed for, the inhabitant, and who drives the car. Of course politicians and designers alike are called to action by films like these, but like the vast majority of sustainability problems, public action (or inaction) directly affects the framework of the current and the future and the framework of change.

Cady Guyton
Annotation #3
What Would Jesus Buy
388 Words

1. Title, director and release year?

What Would Jesus Buy was directed by Rob VanAlkemade and released in 2007.

2. What is the central argument or narrative of the film?

The central argument of the film centers around consumerism, particularly around Christmas time and the association that spending, and things, are linked to happiness, joy, and ultimately a religious holiday.

3. How is the argument or narrative made and sustained? (Use concrete examples from the film to illustrate.)

The movie parodies religion and the Christmas season centering around "Reverend Billy" and the "Church of Stop Shopping Gospel Choir" using evangelical speech and intonation to illustrate the 'passion' and intensity behind the shopping, disposable culture that Americans believe in so intensely, most clearly manifested during the Christmas months.

4. What sustainability issues did you spot? Identify and explain each. (Examples - Political, Legal, Economic, Technological, Media, Organizational, Educational, Behavioral, Cultural, Ecological)

What Would Jesus Buy points out the main problems with consumerism being socially, environmentally and economically unsustainable. Socially it has attached happiness and success to objects, spending, and dollar signs. Economically the film interviews shoppers and reveals the staggering number of people spending outside of their limits—most frequently centering around providing for their children for the holiday season (furthering social unsustainability). Environmentally this shopping and purchasing "things" contributes to waste and requires energy to both create and destroy the objects and the beginning and end of their life.

5. What parts of the film did you find most persuasive and/or compelling?

"Reverend Billy" was most convincing for the parody he illustrates in a new and unconventional way to capture attention and get people to listen.

6. Does the film have emotional appeal to you? Why? (Use concrete examples from the film to illustrate.)

The film has slight emotional appeal with religious connotations but those are frequently paralleled to religious icons parodied with jewelry and shopping bags and the like.

7. Does the film rely more on science or emotion? (How does the film balance the scientific argument and the emotional argument?)

I would submit that the film has to rely more on emotion because while the statistics of shopping cycles and quantities are undeniable they remain relatively low on the "scientific radar" but rather are perhaps more interesting to sociologists and economics. Emotionally, the film begs the viewer to reformulate their priorities.

8. Does the film want you to do something? If the film does suggest action, do you think it is a good idea? Will the suggested action help?

The film wants the viewer to stop shopping, re-evaluate their priority list and try to disassociate happiness with material objects.

9. Are there other actions that are not suggested that should be taken?

The film takes a bottom-up approach pleading with the consumer. The alternative would be a more top down approach to re-evaluate and re-design the capitalist system that has led to this paradigm. However, a system change would leave the mentality and association of happiness and things, unchanged.

10. What was the target audience for this film? Why?

The target audience for the film is the American consumer because that is the clearest and most concise way to interrupt the cycle of want, buy, spend, dispose and repeat.

Cady Guyton
Annotation #4

The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream
386 words

1. Title, director and release year?

The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream is a Canadian documentary released in 2004, directed by Gregory Greene.

2. What is the central argument or narrative of the film?

The central argument of the film is American suburban living and its dependence on cheap oil and ultimate collapse as a result of the oil crisis.

3. How is the argument or narrative made and sustained? (Use concrete examples from the film to illustrate.)

The argument is made by through a visual timeline of suburban sprawl and the shift from urban dwelling to "country living for all" via suburbia.

4. What sustainability issues did you spot? Identify and explain each. (Examples - Political, Legal, Economic, Technological, Media, Organizational, Educational, Behavioral, Cultural, Ecological)

Suburbia remains an unsustainable cultural practice but this film illustrates all of the reasons that it will fail associated with limited resources and our use, abuse, overuse and total reliance on readily available oil in order to "sustain" suburban living.

5. What parts of the film did you find most persuasive and/or compelling?

The film establishes a "purchasing" phase in life that is associated with highlights of American living and development, home ownership, raising a family, acquiring space. This clear statement that links emotional stages of life with things and price tags presents a sort of perversion of priorities that is critical to identifying the problem.

6. Does the film have emotional appeal to you? Why? (Use concrete examples from the film to illustrate.)

The film certainly has an emotional appeal, originating from the critique of a way of life so near and dear to this nation, a way of life that is in no uncertain terms "the American Dream."

7. Does the film rely more on science or emotion? (How does the film balance the scientific argument and the emotional argument?)

This film provides a compelling balance of the scientific and the emotional by tying the emotional facts of suburbia with the undeniable science of the ongoing oil crisis.

8. Does the film want you to do something? If the film does suggest action, do you think it is a good idea? Will the suggested action help?

The film wants you to turn a critical eye on the suburban living that has been elevated as success and prime living. I think it is necessary and the only way that change will be considered if the problems are first presented, and—hopefully—agreed upon.

9. Are there other actions that are not suggested that should be taken?

Suburbia becomes a trickier question because it is entirely a human creation. However while it's a human creation at the most intimate individual scale, it maintains a vastness in scale as a system that we have all plugged into. Thus, a call to action maintains an ultimate hindrance to solution where it requires a certain amount of influence, affluence, drive and money to actually make a change.

10. What was the target audience for this film? Why?

The target audience for this film is the public. It's intriguing as a film about American Suburbia and the American Dream generated by a Canadian producer. For the audience in order to make a change, a change must first be desired.

Cady Guyton
Annotation #5
The Blind Spot
440 Words

1. Title, director and release year?

The Blind Spot was directed by Adolfo Doring and was released in 2008.

2. What is the central argument or narrative of the film?

The central narrative of the film is the reality of the oil crisis that we are living in.

3. How is the argument or narrative made and sustained? (Use concrete examples from the film to illustrate.)

The argument of the film is largely sustained on the narrative of our energy history transitioning from burning wood, to domesticating animals, to harvesting oil, to whatever may come next. This is paralleled with our consumer history that has been generated and literally fueled by the invention of cheap oil.

4. What sustainability issues did you spot? Identify and explain each. (Examples - Political, Legal, Economic, Technological, Media, Organizational, Educational, Behavioral, Cultural, Ecological)

The film made it a point to illustrate how totally dependent our lifestyle is on cheap oil by giving examples of social, economic, environmental, behavioral, culturally, and technologically unsustainability. The idea was that a common factor of historical collapse was when a society has expanded beyond the resources available within their immediate country/vicinity/territory.

5. What parts of the film did you find most persuasive and/or compelling?

I find the "highly, highly individualized society" factor to be most compelling because it illustrates the behavioral and cultural issues that have been manifested by, yet also brought about, cheap oil.

6. Does the film have emotional appeal to you? Why? (Use concrete examples from the film to illustrate.)

The film has a certain amount of emotional appeal in a bit of a "dooms-day" sort of way. The coining of the term "HomoCollusus" outlines the issue that humans are in fact at fault—we consume too much and live too large; though it doesn't exactly offer the hope that humans will take the initiative to alter the current path we are on.

7. Does the film rely more on science or emotion? (How does the film balance the scientific argument and the emotional argument?)

I would argue that the film relies more heavily on science because the emotional case presented by Blind Spot isn't a positive one. Instead, the 2008 film outlines the facts of consumption and the "big business" reality of specifically agriculture and how cheap oil has made it possible and continues to condone these unsustainable practices.

8. Does the film want you to do something? If the film does suggest action, do you think it is a good idea? Will the suggested action help?

The film wants to viewer to use less oil, of course, or at best accept the reality of the oil crisis that we live in. However, the film doesn't layout out specific actions to take on an individual scale, rather that we need a change in our way of life. The movie does outline the importance and necessity of another power source—preferably a sustainable and/or renewable one.

9. Are there other actions that are not suggested that should be taken?

A top-down approach could of course redesign the system that is so dependent on cheap oil. The oil crisis often seems to also offer itself to technological solutions that we may design our way out of it.

10. What was the target audience for this film? Why?

The target audience for this film seems very general and vague in a sort of "whomever will listen" or "anyone that cares" sort of way. Without a specific call to action or single problem, it remains hard to identify a target audience when we are all culprits in the oil crisis.